

Passion of Followers Makes Tomb a Shrine

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Inside, a white cross of flowers and a scarlet crown. Outside, thousands of pilgrims. Elvis Presley's tomb became a shrine three days after his death.

Some of Presley's fans waited all night outside the gate of Forest Hill Cemetery. Two hundred were there when the gates opened Friday. Supt. Ralph Davis figured tens of thousands had passed through by 1 p.m. and there was no letup in the stream.

The mausoleum housing Presley's remains along with those of 300 others was closed for the entire day, the day after his burial, to allow the singer's family to visit in private.

But the fans could pass by the columned building and receive a flower from the 3,116 displays that hid the lawn under a brilliant canvas of color. By noon, the flowers were gone — many destined to be pressed between the covers of books. Some lucky ones got a ribbon.

The visitors then began picking up styrofoam vases, bits of floral wire — anything that would be even the remotest souvenir of Presley.

Many of the women, and some men, wept as they stood before the mausoleum. A few knelt. Most photographed the building.

In a chamber illuminated only by a stab of light filtering through a narrow slit of a window, a three-foot cross of white carnations stood beside Presley's vault. On silken streamers were the names Priscilla and Lisa Marie.

Priscilla is Presley's ex-wife. Lisa Marie is their 9-year-old daughter. Both were at the funeral Thursday, along with Presley's girl friend, Ginger Alden.

The cross was studded with blood-red roses. Beneath it was a velvet crown, trimmed top and bottom with rosebuds. There was a small, golden "X" with a simulated diamond in the middle. No one was available to explain its significance or the donor.

The Presley vault is one of eight in a small chamber in the mausoleum. A wrought iron door permits viewing but bars entry. On the floor was the blanket of roses that covered the copper coffin Thursday.



Tears for Presley

A tear flows down the cheek of Kathy Finley of St. Louis, Mo., as she holds a flower from one of the floral arrangements for Elvis Presley. She was one of the first to visit the mausoleum Friday in Memphis, Tenn., after the body of Presley was placed there Thursday. Flowers were given to visitors as a keepsake (AP).

So far, the vault is unmarked. Cemetery officials said it will be about a month before a brass plate is affixed to the white marble facing.

To get to the mausoleum, the fans had to walk nearly a mile uphill on the winding roads of Forest Hill, which

— like the Presley mansion — is located on Elvis Presley Boulevard.

Young and old made the walk without complaint.

"Elvis just gets through to people," said Rita Stickell of Baltimore, like many others still speaking of Presley in the present tense.

Hit-and-Run Suspect Is Held Without Bail

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (UPI) — An 18-year-old service station worker charged with the hit-and-run deaths of two young teen-agers outside the gates of Elvis Presley's mansion was ordered held without bond Friday after a statement from his mother.

"There's something wrong with him — something wrong with his mind," Olivia Wheeler told City Court Judge Horace Pierotti during arraignment of her son, Treatise Wheeler, on two counts of second-degree murder.

Wheeler is charged with driving his car into the crowd of mourners who gathered outside Presley's mansion following his death.

The judge, who scheduled

a preliminary hearing for 9 a.m. Monday, said he revoked a \$20,000 bond set earlier for Wheeler because of the mother's statement.

"If it is true what his mother says about his condition, there should be no bond until Monday morning," Pierotti said.

Police told Pierotti during the hearing that Wheeler "seemed to accelerate at a high rate of speed" before his car skidded and killed the teen-agers. The car hit Alice Hovatt and Judy Johnson, both 19 and both from Monroe, La., into the air, killing them instantly. Tammy Baiter, 17, of St. Clair, Mo., was hospitalized in critical condition with a shattered pelvis.



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